

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-10 ADP-00 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01

PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-15 IO-13 RSR-01 /137 W

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FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0482

INFO USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY BONN

USINT CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L TRIPOLI 1126

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINT LY EG TS

SUBJECT: RUMORS THAT QADHAFI HAS RESIGNED

SUMMARY: QADHAFI'S FAILURE TO SPEAK OR APPEAR SEPTEMBER ONE ON OCCASION OF FOURTH ANNIVERSARY OF LIBYAN REVOLUTION LED TO PRESS REPORTS ABROAD AS WELL AS RUMORS HERE THAT HE HAD ONCE AGAIN RESIGNED. BELIEVE THESE REPORTS ARE FALSE.

1. HAVE REASONS TO BELIEVE (SEPTTEL) THAT QADHAFI'S NON-APPEARANCE THAT DAY WAS DUE TO HIS DISAPPOINTMENT HE COULD NOT SPEAK ABOUT IMMEDIATE UNITY WITH EGYPT AND DID NOT WANT TO BE PUT IN THE FALSE POSITION OF OF CLAIMING SATISFACTORY PROGRESS IN THAT AREA. APPARENTLY THIS WAS A LAST-MINUTE DECISION, HOWEVER, CONFIDENTIAL

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AND AS HE WAS FULLY EXPECTED, EVEN BY THE ANNOUNCER

AT THE REVIEWING STAND FOR THE ANNUAL MILITARY PARADE (SEE FBIS COVERAGE), HIS FAILURE TO ARRIVE THERE WITH BOURGUIBA CAUSED TONGUES TO WAG.

2. ONE OF THESE BELONGED TO ERIC ROULEAU, CORRESPONDENT OF LE MONDE, PARIS. WE HAVE IT INDIRECTLY FROM TWO SOURCES THAT, FACED WITH A DEADLINE TEN MINUTES LATER, ROULEAU FILED A STORY SAYING THAT "ACCORDING TO RUMORS CIRCULATING IN TRIPOLI" QADHAFI'S ABSENCE WAS ONE OF SEVERAL INDICATIONS THAT PERHAPS HE HAD RESIGNED, THE BASIC REASON BEING HIS EVIDENT FAILURE TO MAKE HEADWAY WITH SADAT ON UNITY.

3. HOWEVER, SEPTEMBER 2 QADHAFI WAS SHOWN ON LOCAL TV MEETING WITH BOURGUIBA PRIOR TO LATTER'S DEPARTURE. THERE IS ALSO A GENERAL ABSENCE OF SIGNS OF ANY INTERNAL CRISIS IN LARG, EXCEPT POSSIBLY PM JALLUD'S FIVE HOUR PRESS CONFERENCE SEPT 2 WHEREIN HE FAILED TO MENTION THE CHAIRMAN OF THE RCC. THIS WAS A MISSED OPPORTUNITY TO QUASH RUMORS, BUT WE ARE NOT SURE THAT IN ITSELF IT WAS SIGNIFICANT.

4. COMMENT: QADHAFI IS FREQUENTLY AND INCREASINGLY IN A STATE OF RESIGNATION OR THREAT THEREOF. SO ANY REPORT THAT HE HAS AGAIN RESIGNED IS PLAUSIBLE. BUT IN THIS CASE WE WOULD CREDIT THE STORY, AT THIS TIME, AS NO MORE THAN ANOTHER INSTANCE OF A PERSONAL BEHAVIOR TRAIT--TEMPORARY WITHDRAWAL FROM A SPECIFIC FUNCTION EXPECTED OF THE CHIEF OF STATE.

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